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The Running Man



Synopsis

The runaway bestseller about the ultimate reality show. The year is 2025. The Running Man is America's favorite television game show. Ben Richards is the program's latest contestant- and the Hunters' latest target in a rigged game of death.

Book Information

Audio CD

Publisher: Penguin Audio; Unabridged edition (April 4, 2013)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1611761441

ISBN-13: 978-1611761443

Product Dimensions: 5.7 x 5.2 x 0.8 inches

Shipping Weight: 0.8 ounces

Average Customer Review: 4.3 out of 5 starsÂ See all reviewsÂ (371 customer reviews)

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Customer Reviews

It is the year 2025, TV is truly the opiate of the people, and society is divided sharply between the haves and the have-nots. Ben Richards' family is in the latter group. He's been unfairly blacklisted and his wife has had to resort to hooking to pay the bills. Meanwhile, his baby daughter lies ill with the flu - perfectly treatable if only they could afford it. Desperate and at the end of his rope, Richards opts to participate in a game show called "The Running Man." He is to become the quarry in a deadly hunt that will last no more than thirty days. For each day he successfully evades his pursuers, his family earns a large sum of money. No one has ever lasted more than eight days. The games network, of course, hardly plays fair. The rules require Ben to periodically mail in videos, thereby running the risk of giving his location away. And rewards are given for any information leading to his apprehension, so Richards is also playing against a bored and bloodthirsty public -- in other words, everyone. The ongoing hunt is very suspenseful, but it's when Richards finally confronts his true nemesis that things get really interesting. As I was reading I couldn't help thinking that this story was ready-made for film. It moves along at a rapid pace, especially once the game is underway. It's not simplistic, but neither is it complicated enough that it should require much tampering. (I've not yet seen the movie, but from what I have heard they somehow dropped the ball.

Too bad.) The concept of reality TV probably seemed outrageous or at least far-fetched in 1982, when *The Running Man* first appeared. Now it seems disturbingly prescient. Though the book belongs in the science fiction genre, it is more frightening than many of his horror stories.

It's 2025. The world's poor live in abject poverty while the rich live in highrises ignoring the starving masses grovelling around them. Dissent is repressed by heavy handed police, and the ironically named Free Vee (the TV went out of style years ago) with its sadistic game shows. These macabre shows - with names like 'Fun Guns' and 'Dig Your Own Grave' - tempt desperate slum dwellers with quick cash but in order to obtain the prize money the contestants must put their body and pride on the line for the enjoyment of the millions of viewers across the world. One man, Ben Richards, driven by the inability to provide for his wife and influenza stricken daughter, decides to join the hundreds of impoverished who line up before the enormous Games Building for a chance to win the elusive prizes. Richards however is different from the average drug addict or street bum who tries out for the games. He's fit and smart - exceptionally smart. So intelligent that he's picked for the most grueling show of all: 'The Running Man'. A game where the player must try to stay free as long as he can as he tries to hide from the rest of America and a group of elite special forces called the Hunters. If the contestant is caught before thirty days (an impossible goal) the game is over and the contestant killed. I immediately began to enjoy the main character, Ben Richards from the very start. King creates a typical outcast of society, and rebel of authority but then adds a more sensitive side to the character. Balancing Richards' scathing wit with his powerful love for his family the author makes Richards both intensely charismatic and convincing. Definitely one of my favourite literary characters ever. However King doesn't stop there.

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